

While the Irish made their presence felt in America, we like to believe America's presence was felt in Ireland as well. Ideas about self-government that developed here were carried across the ocean and espoused by leaders like Wolfe Tone, Daniel O'Connell, and Charles Stewart Parnell. The devotion of Irish-Americans to the cause of Irish liberty and their support of the Irish state is renowned here at home and around the world.

Today we celebrate all these ties and others that go to the deepest part of our life and character as a nation. But we cannot imagine America without the Irish-Americans. Whether in business or politics, the arts or entertainment, or making the life of every community in this country a little stronger, they have graced our country in immeasurable ways.

President Robinson, in 1916 Patrick Pearse, the Irish poet and patriot, described Irish-Americans as the, "sea-divided Gael." It was a haunting phrase from a year of bloodshed. Tonight, we see that on both sides of the sea, the Irish are flourishing. The love and joy that unites us is far, far broader and stronger than the sea which divides us.

So ladies, and gentleman, let us all raise a glass to the partnership of Ireland and America, to the extraordinary community of Irish-Americans for which we are so grateful, and to the President of Ireland and her health, well-being, and the future of her beloved country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:25 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks Following the Entertainment at the State Dinner *June 13, 1996*

Weren't they wonderful tonight? They made us all so happy. *[Applause]*

I also want to say to President Robinson that she brought America a little of the luck of the Irish. I am pleased to announce to you that while we were here at dinner the long standoff with the freemen in Montana ended peacefully tonight. I want to thank the FBI and the local law enforcement officials and say I am very, very proud of them. I

know I speak for all of our people, when we say we'll all say a little prayer tonight of gratitude for this peaceful resolution of a difficult situation.

Finally, you heard President Robinson say this is an Irish event and it can't end early, so after we break up, the Air Force Airmen of Note will be playing here. We urge you to stay and dance to your heart's content or till the angry neighbors run us off. *[Laughter]* My experience is that will be quite some time. You can make it until dawn. *[Laughter]*

Again, I thank you, Mary Chapin Carpenter; thank you, Mary Black; thank you, gentlemen. It was a wonderful, wonderful evening. And most of all, thank you, President Robinson. Thank you, Nick. It was wonderful for Hillary and me to have you here. Bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to singers Mary Chapin Carpenter and Mary Black. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Proclamation 6904—Father's Day, 1996

June 13, 1996

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

America owes a debt of gratitude to the fathers that help our Nation's children grow up safe and happy. Providing a wellspring of love for their families to draw upon, these men strengthen our communities and enable their daughters and sons to master life's lessons with confidence. They share with us their experiences and energies, creating the strong foundation on which our children build their lives. A father's arm is there to protect and steer—whether cradling a newborn baby, steadying the rider of a first two-wheeler, or walking his child down the aisle.

Fatherhood provides one of life's most profound joys and one of its most solemn responsibilities. Everyone who has been blessed by a father's love knows the abiding respect it inspires and the self-esteem that can grow from a dad's affectionate guidance.